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Friends' Industrial Mission, Pemba.

A Short Sketch of its History,
Growth and Prospects.

—BY—
M. CATHARINE ALBRIGHT.



HERBERT ARMITAGE, WITH NATIVE BOYS, IN HORI (CANOE).

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THERE is always an interest about the beginnings of any enterprise, and the establishment of the Friends' Industrial Mission on the island of Pemba is no exception. The only difficulty is where to place the beginning; but for the purposes of this short account, we may do so on a certain day in January, 1897, when two Friends, Theodore Burt and Henry Stanley Newman, stood on the deck of a little steamer that was entering the bay of Chake Chake, the capital of the island.

It was just at sunrise, as it happened, perhaps of all hours the most beautiful in that part of the world. Immense cumulus clouds lift themselves from the horizon, and soar up into the heavens, their summits rosy with the coming light. They tower above the low wooded shores, lingering on as long as may be to protect the verdure of the island from the fierce rays of the later sun.

It is a precious hour of beauty and comparative cool; the freshness and fragrance of the night still lingers, smoke is rising from the thatched roofs of the native huts, and the great branches of the palms and bananas stir gently in the early morning breeze. Everywhere is luxuriant greenery, from the tall cocoanut palms that crown the heights, through the thick-foliaged clove plantations, down to the strange mangrove bushes that dip their leaves into every creak and inlet of the bay.

The steamer anchors in the open, and our Friends must reach the landing by boat; the black boys who row them to shore will be their first acquaintances among the natives of Pemba.

But it is time now to ask the question: "What has

brought these two Friends to this particular island? " Beautiful as it is, the reason is not its beauty, but rather the terrible conditions which its beauty hides. Lying as it does within sight and easy reach of the mainland of East Africa, it has been able to play a special part in the iniquities of that sorrowful land. Arab raiders, fresh from their devastation of some unprotected tribe or village, have brought their human prey down the long marches to the coast and there embarked them for Zanzibar or Pemba.

Once across the little strip of open sea, their living cargo could be run up some winding inlet, where shoals and shifting currents would secure them from pursuit. The horrors of that middle-passage need not be dwelt upon here; it is enough to picture the helpless slave as he lands, and finds himself either the chattel and forced-labourer of some Arab landowner on the island itself, or only there in readiness to be trans-shipped at a convenient moment to a slave-market in Arabia, or some still more distant corner of the Mohammedan world.

At the time of our Friends' arrival, the more open traffic in slaves was already a thing of the past. The great slave-market in Zanzibar had been closed for some twenty-five years, and British gun-boats were liable to capture any Arab Dhow which they found trying to run across the channel with a cargo of slaves. The British had also declared a " Protectorate " over the coast line of East Africa and the adjacent islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, and the ruling of the Sultan of Zanzibar was therefore more or less controlled from the Foreign Office in London. For slavery to exist even in a British Protectorate was felt to be a disgrace to the flag, and Parliament was prepared to agitate until the disgrace was removed.

The beginning of the year 1897 was thus a psychological moment for the arrival of our two Friends, sent out on behalf of " The Anti-Slavery Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings," with a view to bridging over the gulf between slavery and freedom, and making sure that the oppressed victims of the slave-trade had at least a friend at hand to assist them into the rights and duties of a life of freedom.

Some of those in authority, who believed in freedom theoretically, were fearful of its effect in practice on a people so long kept in slavery; and it was evident

to all that the transition-time would be beset with difficulties, both for the slave-owners and the slaves. Perhaps the best service that could be rendered to the island, therefore, would be a demonstration of what might be asked and expected of freed-slaves, if right conditions of labour were open to them, and kindly management took the place of cruelty and oppression.

Such an experiment had the approval and encouragement of the Government officials, who received Theodore Burt and H. S. Newman hospitably and put a furnished house at their disposal till further arrangements could be made. Such was the beginning of the Friends' Industrial Mission in January, 1897. Henry Stanley Newman stayed only a few weeks in Pemba, helping Theodore Burt with preliminary enquiries and investigations, and then returned to England, leaving the pioneer missionary to make his way alone among the people, learn the language and determine how practically to carry out his scheme.

Meanwhile, in February of the same year, Lord Salisbury sent out from the Foreign Office at home a despatch practically abolishing the legal status of slavery in East Africa and the islands, which was followed up in April by a decree of the Sultan of Zanzibar proclaiming the same to all his subjects. This marked an important step in advance, but it still left the matter in the hands of the slave, who was expected to demand his practical freedom in a public law-court before an Arab judge, a man of the same type as his master, and probably himself still a slave-holder. Many had not the requisite knowledge or courage to demand their rights, and it was to the interest of their masters to keep them ignorant.

In Pemba itself no facilities for emancipation were provided, until our missionaries insisted on the establishment of a proper court under European control. Many months and even years elapsed before the new thought of freedom penetrated into the dark corners of the island, and many were the times when the ex-slaves needed a strong and wise helper at hand to protect them from their past oppressors. It was not, in fact, till the year 1909 that slavery ceased to exist and all natives became automatically free.

Theodore Burt was not left long to do the work alone. In May, 1897, he was joined by Herbert Armitage, and they soon proceeded to the purchase

of a plantation, or *shamba*, where a house could be built and a beginning made with the employment of free labour on the land. This was the estate of Banani, one of the most beautiful and fertile spots on the island, commanding the entrance to the main harbour of Chake Chake, and conveniently situated for arriving and departing steamers. The £1,000 necessary for the purchase had been generously found by one Friend at home; and in the month of July the Mission took over the Estate and commenced to develop it as the future home for Theodore Burt and his wife and for the negro cultivators.

Jessie Burt followed her husband to Pemba a year after his first arrival, and was accompanied by Celia Armitage, sister to Herbert Armitage, and by Arnold Wigham. Thus the staff was increased in one year from one to five. A boat, also, was sent out from home, called "The Friend of Pemba," and a frame house to be put up on the promontory of the Banani estate, suitable for the residence of the missionaries.

On August 27th they paid their first week's wages to sixteen men and gave them clear instructions that the money was their own. By the end of September all the former slaves on the estate had claimed and received their freedom, and great were the rejoicings in the families concerned.

Apart from those assisted by our own missionaries, very few slaves on the island dared as yet to claim their new rights; and as in every case compensation had to be paid to the owner by the Government in Zanzibar, the magistrates, both Arab and British, tended to clog the wheels of emancipation.

One example may be quoted here:—A slave called Baba Yoakali applied to the missionaries for freedom, and was duly sent on to Court. The English magistrate made fun of him, and twisted his application into a denial in this fashion:—"You do not wish for freedom, you, an overseer with a good position and a house, and food and good clothes—it must be a mistake; fancy a man like you going out to work for your living and having no home!" The poor fellow, brow-beaten and discouraged, agreed that it was a mistake, and so the case was dismissed. Baba Yoakali then returned downcast and miserable to the mission station, and when questioned, "So you do not want your freedom?" replied, "I want it badly, badly." "Then



THEODORE AND JESSIE BURTT.

why did you say you did not?" "What could I say? What could I do? The master had many words, I felt ashamed."

In the summer of 1898 Theodore and Jessie Burt moved into their new home on the Banani shamba, whilst Herbert and Celia Armitage remained in the house in Chake Chake, gathering round them a few boys for training and teaching, and gradually getting into touch with their Arab and Hindu neighbours, as well as with the Swahili or negro population. Emily Hutchinson, sister of Jessie Burt, joined them a little later and devoted herself specially to dispensary, nursing and kindergarten work.

Celia Armitage gives some interesting reminiscences of these early days: "The novelty of the new situation and the exceeding beauty of the outlook all around, the sunshine and leafy verdure, helped to make every one of us more than satisfied and to compensate for any discomforts that might be experienced. Then the Swahili people are so attractive, their dark faces light up so quickly with a smile, showing their rows of clean, good teeth, and they are so gentle and respectful. The courtesy and politeness of the Arabs were pleasant, also, even if in those days their hearts were known to be somewhat against us. And the Hindus were equally interesting and very useful. By mutual preference Emily Hutchinson treated the patients that came daily, whilst I devoted myself to teaching the boys.

“ One little boy named Sanura, of perhaps eight years of age, used to arrive as early as the daylight came, and amuse himself until his bad sore could be attended to, and afterwards join the other scholars. He was slow at learning either to read or write, but loved the Bible stories and pictures and hymns. One day an Arab lady called Binti Mradi sent her messenger to announce that she wished to call. All the men and boys on the place were immediately told to take themselves away, as a man must not see or be seen by an Arab lady. We welcomed her with interest and pleasure. After polite questions had been asked and answered, she told us that she had come to learn about Jesus. She said that the child of a slave, whose name was Sanura, had learned a great deal from us, and had gone to her house every day lately and told them all he could remember, and it was very good. At her desire we regularly visited and read with her once a week, and a few Arab ladies, friends of hers, joined the group.

At first the Industrial work of the Mission was mainly directed towards making healthy and habitable the places where the missionaries were going to live. Very quickly the mangrove swamp round the shore at Banani was a thing of the past, but the draining of moist places generally was a more tedious affair. The improvement of the crops on the *shamba* was, of course, a matter of prime importance, and it was soon the case that cocoanuts became more abundant and that the quality of the cloves from Banani was finer than the average of other estates. Wells were dug, boats were mended and built, canoes were fashioned, the native village at Banani was laid out, and, later on, the new Boys' Home at Chachani was designed under the care of Herbert Armitage; whilst a further house across the road, called Tarajani, was put in order for Emily Hutchinson.

About this time Commissioner Railton, of the Salvation Army, visited Banani and gave a report of the Mission to the Anti-Slavery Society as follows :—“ No one appears yet to have realised the greatness of the work you have in hand in Pemba. It is really the formation of a model village, with streets and avenues of trees and native houses, thus introducing the orderly features of civilized life. All the labour on the Banani estate has been on the principle of teaching the people

to earn their own money and pay their own way. It is the exhibition of well-ordered life. You are raising up, it may be, a great missionary force of the future.

"I can quite understand the objection as to its being a commercial enterprise. But it is not a valid objection. If you were only to teach them religion, people would complain that you did not teach them industry. You must teach *both*. - Mr. Burt has the management of a large estate, and the people come to him about everything, whether a man wants a nail or a wife. Beside the service you have with the people before they begin work in the morning, you will find the evening is just the time when the people are at leisure after their work is done, and when you can introduce the gospel and produce religious impression.

"There is a tincture of Mohammedanism among all these people you have to reckon with. The coloured people of East Africa have a lingering feeling that the Europeans are too masterful. Their Mohammedan masters in some ways seem nearer to them, and they retain Mohammedan superstitions with regard to certain portions of the Koran and in other ways. But you have already made real headway, and if your Society had evangelizing missionaries to work among them in the evening there might be a great result and in-gathering. The freed people under your care are being brought up with an air of independence that is most commendable."

The early years of the Mission were not without their troubles and sorrows, as well as their joys and encouragements. In September, 1899, Richard and Fanny Easton arrived in Pemba. They were apparently strong and healthy, and were enthusiastic in their delight at the progress already made. The reverent attitude of the people during service astonished them, and they began their work with great interest. Fanny Easton was a trained nurse, and she found use for her skill among her companion workers and in treating native patients. Richard Easton quickly learned to help in overlooking the work-people and managed to understand and convey a good deal before he could speak the language.

But their work was soon to be ended. Fanny Easton developed fever, and it kept returning upon her. During one of these attacks her husband also fell ill of the same complaint, and she rose from her



MISSIONARY BUNGALOW AT BANANI.

bed to nurse him. After four days' illness he succumbed, in January, 1900. Arnold Wigham had been invalided home a month before and died in England some months later. Fanny Easton lived to work on another year, but died in Pemba in June, 1901.

In the meantime Theodore and Jessie Burt had taken their first furlough home, and had safely returned again to their work. A little son had been born to them after their return, whom they named Arnold Wigham after their beloved fellow-worker. Two years later their family was increased by the birth of a daughter; and these two children both grew up for a time in the tropical conditions at Banani without apparently suffering in health.

But as the years went on it became increasingly evident that the climate of the island was one that needed the greatest precaution on the part of the missionaries, if they were not to succumb to its influence. One and another found it necessary to come back to England to recruit, and it was not always possible to return again. H. Lesley and Agnes Gardner replaced Herbert and Celia Armitage for a time, and did excellent work in the island in connection with the Boys' Home and carpenter's shop, but were unable to continue their labours.

The following letter written to Celia Armitage by one of her pupils, shortly after her departure from the

island, is interesting as throwing light on the personal links she had formed there :—

"Greetings to her whom I love, my Miss Armitage! Art thou very well thyself? For myself I am well, only how is it with thee? We do not see thee at all. Thou did'st not want to go to thy country except on account of thy health. Now we see thy picture only, but thou art invisible. I cannot look at thy picture at all without feeling sad. Well, if the Lord God enables thee to get better thou wilt come again here in Pemba, but, if not, if the Lord God does not enable thee to recover I shall be very sorry. I am helping Mr. Armitage now, working in the house entirely, and Master says he will give me more pice. My words are finished.

"I am Mateto, son of Mabruki."

CHAKE CHAKE, PEMBA, *Nov. 3, 1903.*

In the short space here available it is impossible to record the progress of the Mission year by year; but we may mention that 1906 was particularly a year of rejoicing, as marking the first harvest of the seed already sown. There had been encouraging signs that hearts and lives had been changed by the Holy Spirit, and even among the boys of the Home, Bibles were searched and questions asked that showed earnest thought and conviction. It was, therefore, with great thankfulness that the missionaries saw five youths and two men come forward publicly to confess Christ as their Saviour, and form the nucleus of a native Christian Church. These early converts had been much helped in the training by the native teacher, Cecil Matolas. He was a capital teacher, able to maintain excellent discipline, and his teaching of Scripture not only roused interest but enthusiasm.

The difficulty of maintaining a staff of European workers in the Mission on account of the climatic conditions has already been mentioned. This and other considerations led to a very serious discussion in the Yearly Meeting of the Society in 1909 as to the advisability of continuing the work now that one of the chief objects of the Mission had been accomplished, viz., the total abolition of the system of slavery and the assistance of the Swahilis during the time of transition. In consequence of this discussion it was decided to send out a special deputation of Friends to investigate the matter and report to the home committee. Joseph and S. Katharine Taylor were about to return to their work in India and agreed to take Pemba on their way, and M. Catharine Albright accompanied them.

Before giving the result of their enquiries, we may

quote from their report some impressions of the island which will add to the picture already drawn :—" It is a busy, brilliant, bewildering little place, this town of Chake Chake ; a mixture of squalor and dignity, of bustle and languor, of brilliance and gloom ; a mixture, too, of many languages and races, almost cosmopolitan, though so small and isolated. It owns 2,000 out of the whole 83,000 inhabitants of the island. Of these 2,000, one-sixth are Indians from the Bombay and Gujerati districts, and are engaged in trading and shop-keeping ; about one-tenth are Arab landowners, formerly the slave-owning gentry of the island ; there are a handful of Parsees and Goanese, and ten Europeans, while the rest are Wa-Swahili or ' natives,' in reality brought from the mainland in former times as slaves to labour on the clove plantations. In the more outlying parts of the island there are a certain number of ' natives ' of a more primitive type, known as Wa-Pemba. Four languages are in current use—Swahili, Arabic, Gujerati and English—and public notices are put up everywhere in all the last three, though Swahili is the most important of the four.

" From the estate of Banani at the entrance of the bay we can look across a lovely stretch of sheltered harbour to the little town of Chake Chake, spreading itself above the wooded shore, and at one end among the thick greenery of palms, mangoes, etc., we catch sight of the Boys' Home at Chachani. If wind and tide favour it may be reached by boat in three-quarters of an hour, and we may even row right up under the cliff and climb by a steep footpath to the house itself, thus avoiding the dusty, hot walk through the town.

" From the workshops at Chachani all sorts of work are turned out. The missionary in charge is supposed to be ready to undertake anything, from building a church, a meeting-house, a residence or a boat, to repairing property of all kinds and making furniture or implements. The boys who pass through their apprenticeship with him go out to make their way in the world as carpenters, tin-smiths, builders, etc. Here again, as at Banani, the day begins with a short service in the adjoining meeting-house, to which come also from across the road the girls from the Tarajani house, accompanied by their teachers. If we go back with them when it is over, we shall find them busy with their simple household duties, cooking, dusting,



IN BANANI VILLAGE.

washing, sewing and, of course, giving some hours each day to simple lessons. The lady missionary in charge has to supervise all these activities and concern herself also with nursing the sick, visiting the women of the town, and generally being ready to advise in all emergencies, public and private.

“ It is not easy for Friends at home to realize what it means to carry on such work as this, month after month, in a climate where no bracing ‘ wild north-easter ’ ever blows, and where one sleeps and wakes, thinks and works in the atmosphere of a hot-house fernery, only varied by steamy blasts through open doors and unglazed windows, while during certain months of the year drenching torrents nearly wash away house and home.”

So much for the report of the deputation as regards

the descriptive side of it. More important, however, were the conclusions and recommendations; they included two main items, viz. :—

1. Better provision for the health of missionaries by improvement of houses, frequent furloughs, etc.
2. Development of the work by better equipment:—
 - (a) Acquisition of further property at Wesha, etc.
 - (b) Provision of oil-engine, saw and other plant for the carpenter's shop.
3. Increase of staff to include a trained educationalist and an additional trained nurse to work among the Indian women.

It will be seen that the result of the visiting-deputation, far from confirming the idea of abandoning the Mission or transferring it to other hands, was strongly to favour its continuance and development. As a direct result, the additional property of house and land at Wesha was purchased; a beautiful spot just opposite Banani, at the entrance of the harbour. Since then a new dormitory and meeting-house have been erected, and the whole place now houses the younger boys who have been transferred there from Chachani, and who are thus happily removed from the unwholesome proximity to the town to the healthier life of the *shamba*. From Wesha, also, it is possible to reach country districts where small Christian communities are gradually growing up.

Roughly speaking, then, we may say that the material recommendations of the deputation have been met and carried out by the kindness and generosity of Friends at home, and that good results have followed in the general development of the work, and above all in the improved health of the staff, which is a great cause for thankfulness. It appears now that with care, the use of quinine, and frequent furloughs, either to the mainland or to England, there is no occasion to fear a repetition of the sad fatalities that marked the early days.

But the latter, and in some ways the most important recommendations of the deputation, have not yet taken effect. The Committee still wait for the right man or woman to volunteer on the educational side, who will go out definitely to train up a body of native men and women to be in their turn evangelists and teachers, spreading the influence of Christianity into outlying

parts of the island, in a way it is impossible for the European missionary to accomplish, and becoming themselves pillars of the growing native Church.

Nor has any additional missionary yet come forward on the women's side of the work. The need for more attention to the women was indeed so evident that, two years ago, the boarding school for girls was given up, and they were sent to live at home and have their teaching at the small day school at Banani, so releasing the energies of our two ladies at Tarajani to teach, visit, and nurse the Swahili and Indian women both in town and country.

Much has been done on these lines. Ellen Robinson has visited the villages, riding out day after day on her donkey, and collecting round her little groups of women to listen for the first time to the simplest stories and hymns, and to learn the elements of sewing. Emily Hutchinson has specially devoted herself to women in town, both Indians and Swahilis. There is a growing demand for more teaching and training, both in their own homes and in small classes. It would be easy to gather together quite a considerable school of girls from the Indian families for regular instruction, especially if the missionary in charge could speak Gujarati.

But even as things are, there is a most encouraging movement among the women and a desire to learn and come to classes and meetings.

In summarising the work of the Mission, we must not forget the regular visits paid to the Leper Colony—sad visits enough in themselves, but furnishing a ray of light for those outcasts from society.

There are now four properties on the island belonging to the Mission:—

1. The original estate of Banani, comprising missionary bungalow, school, meeting-room, and native village and some acres for cultivation of cloves, cocoanut palms, etc.
2. Chachani: residence, industrial workshop, school and meeting-house.
3. Tarajani: residence for lady workers.
4. Wesha: missionary bungalow, younger boys' home and school, and small plantation opposite Banani.

In addition to these centres of Christian influence, staffed by Europeans, there is great satisfaction in

knowing that many native converts have gone out to take up land on their own account and to initiate village communities where the influence of Christianity is felt. Others have been trained as carpenters, blacksmiths, boatmen, house stewards, native tailors and laundry workers, and take their place in the general industry of the island.

The names of missionaries now on the staff are as follows:—

Theodore Burtt.	J. Edgar Bowes.
Jessie H. Burtt.	Elizabeth Bowes.
Emily Hutchinson.	Herbert Dalley.
Frank Roylance.	Birgit Dalley.
Margaret M. Roylance.	Andrew D. Johnston.

We much regret that Ellen Robinson has felt obliged to resign and take up other work.

The year 1916 has seen a new wave of interest in the Mission on the part of the Swahili themselves, and an encouraging readiness to join the native Church and learn the duties and responsibilities of membership. This is the true test of a Mission and a cause for great thankfulness. Our missionaries report crowded attendances at meetings, and listeners standing outside at the open doors and windows.

Summing up the whole situation, we may say that the hopes of the Yearly Meeting of 1897 have been wonderfully realised, as expressed in the prayer: "That the Friends interested in the Mission may know the guiding hand of the Lord, step by step, and that the Mission may promote the material, moral, and spiritual well-being of the inhabitants of the island."

1916.

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